

DEVIL'S SLIDE FENCE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA-OR-025-00-18

BURNS DISTRICT OFFICE  
HINES, OREGON

May 2000

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction .....	1
A.	Purpose and Need .....	1
B.	Conformance with Land Use Plans .....	1
II.	Proposed Action and Alternative .....	1
A.	Proposed Action .....	1
B.	Alternative 1 - No Action .....	2
III.	Affected Environment .....	2
A.	Vegetation .....	2
B.	Soils .....	2
C.	Wildlife .....	2
D.	Threatened and Endangered Species .....	2
E.	Cultural Resources .....	2
F.	Recreation .....	2
G.	Visual Resources .....	2
IV.	Environmental Consequences .....	3
A.	Vegetation .....	3
B.	Soils .....	3
C.	Wildlife .....	3
D.	Threatened and Endangered Species .....	4
E.	Cultural Resources .....	4
F.	Recreation .....	4
G.	Visual Resources .....	4
V.	Consultation with Others .....	4
VI.	Preparers .....	4
VII.	Appendices .....	4

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I. INTRODUCTION

The project is located in the Williams Dripp Allotment in T. 18 S., R.33½ E., Sec. 26. It is approximately 35 air miles northeast of Burns, Oregon.

A. Purpose and Need

The project is needed to improve grazing management of this allotment. Currently, the cattle spend almost all the grazing period in the lower two-thirds of the allotment and the upper third receives almost no use, even though it is readily accessible from a livestock water source (spring) on the Dash W Bar Ranch private land. When cattle are placed in the underutilized area, they rapidly head down the Devil's Slide area and go to the elevations where all the use is concentrated. A fence is needed to split the allotment into two pastures to achieve more even utilization of forage and to allow one pasture to be deferred from grazing each spring. Improving rangeland productivity and condition is the ultimate objective.

B. Conformance with Land Use Plans

This project is identified in the Williams Dripp Springs Allotment Management Plan which was signed August 24, 1995, and the project is necessary to implement the plan. It is consistent with the objectives in the Three Rivers Resource Management Plan dated September 1992.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVE

A. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to construct a 3-wire fence (bottom wire smooth) across the north end of the Devil's Slide. Fenceposts would be steel and painted green. Five rock cribs and approximately 320 feet of fence would be installed, along with a wire gate. The proposed fence line would not be bladed or scraped. If Special Status plants are found along the proposed fence, it would be relocated. The gate in the fence would be left open when livestock are not present in the allotment.

B. Alternative 1 - No Action

The no action alternative would be to not construct the gate and fence and to leave current grazing management unchanged.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. Vegetation

The vegetation along the fence route is primarily low sagebrush, rigid sagebrush, Idaho fescue, and bluebunch wheatgrass.

B. Soils

The soil is shallow and rocky.

C. Wildlife

Deer, elk, and pronghorn antelope are in the area, as well as a variety of small mammals and birds, including sage grouse.

D. Threatened and Endangered Species

There are no known threatened or endangered species in the project area. Sage grouse, a Special Status species, are present in the area. A site-specific botanical clearance will be completed prior to construction.

E. Cultural Resources

No cultural resources are known to occur along the project site.

F. Recreation

A limited amount of recreation occurs within this area. Recreational activity is associated with hunting.

G. Visual Resources

The project area is within a Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class IV zone (allows modification of the landscape character).

#### IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

No floodplains, wetlands, prime farmlands, paleontological resources, areas with unique characteristics, ecologically critical areas, wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, hazardous wastes, or Areas of Critical Environmental Concern will be affected by either the proposed action or the alternative. Neither the proposed action nor the alternative would have any effect on environmental justice toward minority or low-income populations (as addressed by E.O. 12898), or on air or water quality, and there will be no increase in invasive, nonnative species.

##### A. Vegetation

Proposed Action: A small amount of vegetation would be destroyed by construction of the rock cribs. In the years after the project is completed, improved grazing management should allow increased vegetative cover and improved range condition. The range standards for ecological processes and upland watershed function would be easier to achieve with this anticipated improvement in vegetation.

No Action: There would be no change in vegetation.

##### B. Soils

Proposed Action: Some soil compaction or erosion may occur along the fence from cattle congregating and moving along the fence, but the rockiness of the soil minimizes the chance of any adverse impacts.

No Action: There would be no impact to soils.

##### C. Wildlife

Proposed Action: A small chance exists that a few individual wild animals could be harmed or temporarily displaced by the project, but the fence design is such that impacts to wildlife would be minimal and their mobility would be unhindered. By splitting the allotment into two pastures, the project would allow an ungrazed area each spring for sage grouse and big game habitat needs.

No Action: No additional fence hazards would be created for wildlife, but the opportunity for improved wildlife habitat would be lost.

D. Threatened and Endangered Species

Proposed Action: No adverse impacts would occur, but the sage grouse would benefit from having an ungrazed area to use each spring.

No Action: There would be no impacts, beneficial or otherwise, to Threatened and Endangered or Special Status species.

E. Cultural Resources

Neither the proposed action nor the alternative would have any effect on cultural resources (see Attachment C, BLM/SHPO Memorandum of Agreement).

F. Recreation

There would be no impacts to recreational opportunities.

G. Visual Resources

Proposed Action: The visual impacts of the fence would be well within the VRM guidelines for a Class IV area.

No Action: There would be no visual impacts .

V. CONSULTATION WITH OTHERS

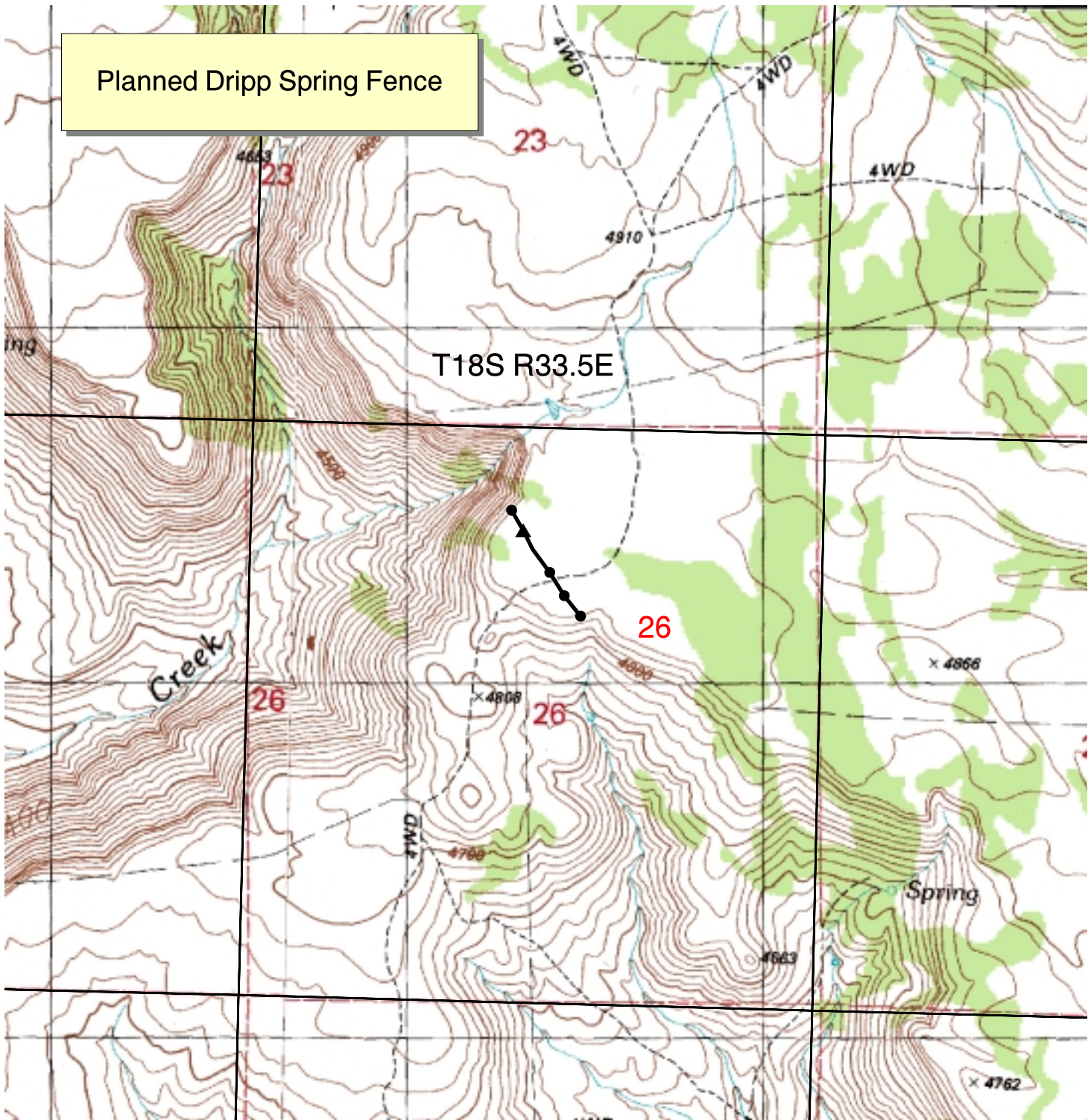
Terry Williams, Permittee

VI. PREPARERS

Rudy Hefter, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist  
Craig Martell, Range Technician  
Brian McCabe, Archaeologist  
Fred McDonald, Natural Resource Specialist  
Lesley Richman, Range Management Specialist  
Fred Taylor, Wildlife Biologist  
Nora Taylor, Botanist

VII. APPENDICES

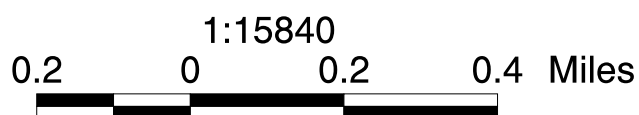
- A. Location Map
- B. Botanical Survey Request Form
- C. BLM/SHPO Memorandum of Agreement



## Planned Dripp Spring Features

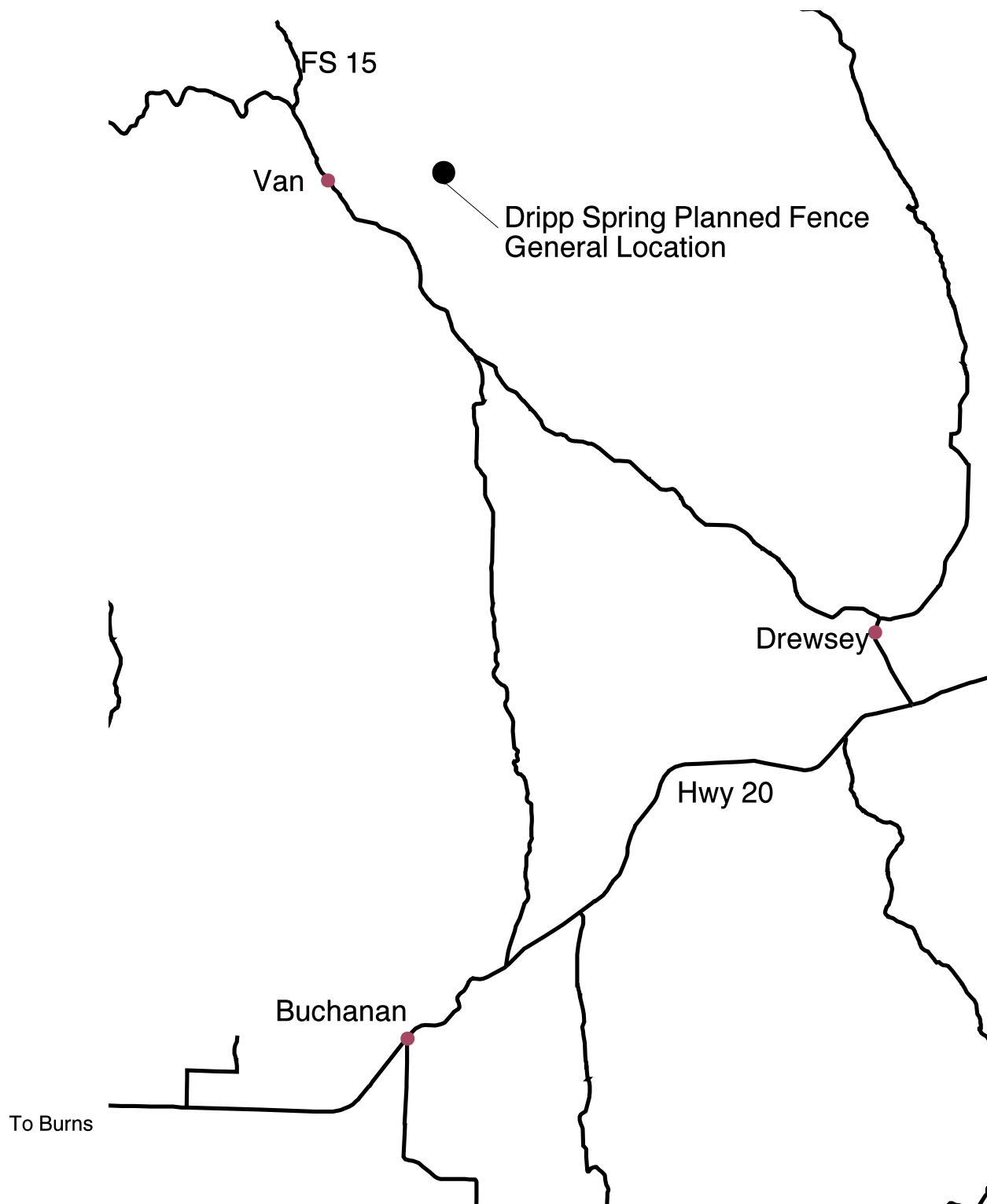
- ROCK CRIB (4)
- ▲ TREE (1)

Planned Dripp Spring Fence



Kelly Hazen, Burns BLM GIS  
May 10, 2000  
drippsfence.apr  
No warranty made by the  
BLM for use of the  
data for purposes  
not intended by the BLM





● Planned Dripp Spring Fence General Location

● Cities

Major Roads

4 0 4 8 Miles

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